



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Nancy Antoine, Northfield Public Schools, Finalist for Minnesota National Distinguished Principal**



*Nancy Antoine*

*(St. Paul, MN, February 27, 2017)* – Nancy Antoine, principal of Bridgewater Elementary in Northfield Public Schools, and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is one of three finalists for Minnesota 2017 National Distinguished Principal (NDP). This marks the 34<sup>th</sup> year MESPA and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) have presented the prestigious award.

“At the helm of every successful school is a successful principal,” said Gail Connelly, NAESP executive director. “Our National Distinguished Principals program provides us with an opportunity to recognize the outstanding leadership of these principals and their commitment to creating successful learning communities. Because of them, students thrive academically, teachers grow professionally, and communities are strengthened.”

The National Distinguished Principals (NDP) program was established in 1984 to recognize elementary and middle level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staffs in their learning communities. The program is based on three fundamental ideas:

- Children’s attitudes toward learning and their perceptions of themselves as lifelong learners are established in the beginning school years.
- The scope and quality of children’s educational experiences are determined primarily by the school principal, who establishes, through the important work of teachers and the support of caring parents, the character of a particular school’s program.
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the outstanding principals who guide children’s early education experiences should be acknowledged to both show appreciation for their work as well as to allow them to serve as models for others in the field.

The NDP program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active principals. Criteria established by NAESP require that the individual:

- Is a practicing principal with at least five years experience in the principalship.
- Plans to continue as a practicing principal.
- Demonstrates evidence of outstanding contributions to the community and to the education profession.
- Leads a school that is clearly committed to excellence.
- Leads a school that has programs designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students.
- Leads a school that has firm ties to parents and the community.

Each year, NDPs represent PreK – 8th grade public schools from all across the country as well as principals in U.S. private schools and those from the United States Department of Defense Office of Educational Activity and the United States Department of State Office of Overseas Schools. Public school elementary and middle-level principals are nominated by peers in their state, and final selections are made by committees appointed by each of NAESP’s state affiliate offices.

Antoine was nominated by Abe Rodemeyer, principal of Byron Intermediate in Byron Public Schools. In his letter of recommendation, he wrote, “As a colleague, I’ve always respected Nancy’s ability to lead thoughtfully, energetically, and most importantly with a student centered mindset. She has a passion for educational equity and has been an ambassador for that cause throughout our organization. Within MESPA I get the opportunity to work alongside so many great principals who are not only

excellent educators but exceptional people. Nancy is at the very top of that distinguished list. She is a woman of integrity and, in my opinion, has the character qualities that would represent the state of Minnesota and the entire NAESP organization.”

All nominated principals were reviewed by a statewide selection committee, including: MESPA’s 12 division presidents; Brad Gustafson, 2016 National Distinguished Principal; and selection committee chair, Tim Bell. On May 5, Antoine and the other two finalists will be interviewed and the selection committee will determine the 2017 Minnesota National Distinguished Principal.

In addition to Nancy Antoine, the finalists for the honor are Lisa Carlson, principal of Woodland Elementary in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public School District, and Jessica Cabeen, principal of Woodson Kindergarten Center in Austin Public Schools.

For more detail on the NDP process, visit *National Distinguished Principal* under *Honors* on MESPA’s website: [www.mespa.net/ndp](http://www.mespa.net/ndp)

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**MESPA works to: Improve** education for Minnesota students through collaboration and advocacy; **Unite** current, past, and future licensed elementary and middle level principals; **Encourage** and support a cooperative relationship between MESPA and other state/national organizations; and **Advocate** for the professional ethical, economic, and social welfare of its members.

**MESPA Mission:** The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association strives to be the premier leadership resource for elementary and middle level principals and a strong leading voice for public education. MESPA is committed to ensuring a high quality education for all children through strengthening and enhancing the principal’s role as educational leader in our schools.